



CALIFORNIA
TABLE GRAPE
COMMISSION

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House Ways and Means Committee
1101 Longworth House Office Building
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To Members of Congress:

California produces 99 percent of the table grapes grown commercially in the U.S. The table grape industry is family owned and operated; most operations are small, all are located in rural areas of the San Joaquin and Coachella valleys. Together, those small operations generate an industry value of \$1.3 billion. The California Table Grape Commission represents California's table grape industry and is charged with maintaining and expanding markets domestically and worldwide for table grapes.

The commission requests Congressional approval and implementation of the U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement (FTA). By helping to ensure economic viability, its implementation will yield benefit to California table grape growers and the rural communities in which they live and work.

California fresh table grapes entering Colombia currently face a 15 percent tariff. This tariff will be eliminated upon implementation of the U.S.-Colombia FTA, making California grapes more affordable for Colombian consumers and more competitive with grapes from competing markets, including Chilean and Peruvian grapes which currently enter Colombia duty-free.

In the 2009-10 season, California exported \$5.2 million worth of table grapes to Colombia; elimination of the 15 percent tariff provides the opportunity to significantly expand California table grape exports to this market. The commission encourages Congress to work with the Obama Administration to make passage and implementation of the U.S.-Colombia FTA a priority.

Please feel welcome to contact me with any questions you might have.

Regards,

Kathleen Nave
President